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THE SPASTICS SOCIETY

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SPASTICS NEWS



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Key:

T—Treatment Available
E—Education
O—Occupational Centre

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Spastics Association **T**
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W—Work Centre

H—Holiday Home

C—Child Care

R—Residential Centre

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Central Middlesex Spastics Welfare
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Hatfield and District Group, Herts
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Hemel Hempstead and District Group,
Herts Spastics Society
Hitchin and District Friends of Spastics,
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Group **TEC**
Maidenhead Friends of Spastics Group
Oxfordshire Spastics Welfare Soc. **TOC**
Reading and Berkshire Spastics Welfare
Society **T**
Slough and District Spastics Welfare
Society
South-West Middlesex Group **T**
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Spastics Society **T**
Walthamstow and District Spastics Society
Watford and District Group, Herts
Spastics Society **TEOC**
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Wycombe and District Spastics Society **T**

Regional Officer:

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41059

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Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic
Development (Inc.)

Carol Goes to School

by

Elizabeth Farnham

CAROL is almost fifteen years old now and it is difficult to realise that only six years ago she was a quiet withdrawn little girl who screamed in terror at every new experience and had to be left out of all our outings because travelling on a bus caused her such distress. Now, sitting in the front row of our senior class, she is the first to put up her hand to be included in every school venture and outing.

Carol, like so many of the children in the large hospital of which our school is a vital part, faces the problem of a double handicap—she is a spastic child and she is also a mentally subnormal child who is unable to benefit from the more formal type of education in a normal school. Mentally she is a five-year-old and her physical disability means that she must use a wheelchair to get about.

They are all subnormal children in our school. There are almost a hundred pupils in the junior department and about 30 in our adult section. Many of these children have dual handicaps; spastic, deaf and dumb, epileptic, deformed and psychotic children share lessons and activities aimed to educate them to the limit of their abilities and make life as interesting and varied for them as possible. The wonderful thing to notice is that many of them really make an effort to help those who are more handicapped than themselves.

Every morning at nine o'clock when the children make their way from the wards to school there is always a great deal of rivalry about pushing the wheelchairs. It is a kind of unwritten tradition in the school that the physically handicapped must have first share, since they have to depend on the others to see that they get it, and on our shopping excursions the children are keen to see that Carol is first at the counter to spend her pocket money. This attitude, however, is sometimes taken to extremes and it is sometimes necessary for teacher to intervene tactfully to ensure that Carol does as much as she can for herself and does not sit back and rely entirely on the other children.

In the Junior school our morning assembly follows the pattern to be found in most schools; the singing of a hymn and the saying of a simple prayer is followed by a short discussion about the date, the weather, and any topical or seasonal events, then the children disperse to their own classrooms.

Carol and her classmates are capable of assimilating a very elementary knowledge of the 3Rs, and for the first twenty minutes they are busy writing, reading or working out simple addition or subtraction sums. This is usually followed by a short session of learning to tell the time, recognise money, compare sizes and distances and generally acquire a basic knowledge which comes automatically to the normal child.

In the intermediate and nursery classes there is little

formal education, but the children learn through the medium of play, walks, pictures and stories. The institutionalised child is inevitably at a disadvantage in being cut off from the community and therefore remaining in ignorance of the everyday world beyond the hospital walls. School helps to remedy this by taking the children out as frequently as possible, by providing films and pictures and by encouraging the children to help in building model villages and talk about and act out life in the community. I find that the children are always hungry for information of this sort, particularly in relation to my own home and family. It has become almost routine for the children in my class to help me make out my weekend shopping list, telling me which kind of shops to go to, what kind of things to buy and how to spend my time. It obviously becomes very important to them and provides a vital link with the outside world.

Many of the smaller children come to us with little or no speech, and through any means at her disposal the teacher must attempt to establish communication, patiently putting words to the children's gestures, and encouraging them to turn meaningless sounds into simple language. When speech is established there are colours to learn, objects to recognise and name and good habits to be developed. These young children soon take a pride in being able to cope with buttons, shoe laces and in being able to wash hands and faces with the minimum degree of supervision.

Music and art play a very important part in the school and many of the children who prove incapable of benefiting much from any other part of the school curriculum prove to have a remarkable sensitivity to music and a pleasing idea of colour.

Our musical activities include percussion band, chime bars, modern and country dancing, music and movement and musical appreciation. Carol is fortunate in having a competent use of her hands and with a good ear for music does well in the band and also in the art room where painting is frequently done to music. Some of the other spastic children are not so fortunate, and ways and means must be found to enable them to participate.

Because so much of our time is given to active rather than sedentary occupations in a school for mentally subnormal children, the teacher must always guard against the tendency of excluding the physically handicapped child and it is one of the advantages of working as a unit within a large hospital that we can call upon the advice and help of the physiotherapist's department, not only to arrange their sessions with the school spastics during lessons which are not very useful to them, but also to devise ways and means of assisting such children to participate as fully as possible with specially designed apparatus and equipment. There are also meetings between school staff, psychologists,

doctors and physiotherapists, and in this way we are able to find out which kind of movements and exercises can be introduced into our P.E. lessons to help individual children with their own particular motor difficulties.

During a games session Carol has the special task of keeping the score and announcing the winners at the end of the game, a responsibility she takes very seriously. Sometimes she is assisted by Martin but he prefers to take command of the game with the minimum of help from the teacher. He usually propels his chair about the field declaring "no ball" if the game is rounders or stoolball and yelling "foul" if someone isn't playing football according to the rules.

Although there are many times that we regret we are not nearer to the city so that we can give our children a closer liaison with the community, we certainly appreciate our rural surroundings during the summer and a good part of our time is spent out of doors. It never ceases to amaze me that our wheelchairs stand up so well to the fields and rough pathways over which they are trundled. Often we find it necessary to lift them over a particularly rough patch of ground and we are never short of willing helpers. We are not many miles from the coast and when the weather is fine it is often possible to commandeer the hospital bus and spend a day on the beach, and once again the chairs come in for some rather rough handling.

Most of the children who attend school spend some of their time in the Occupational Therapy Department so handicrafts do not figure very largely on our timetable. Nevertheless we do give some time to such things as rug-making, embroidery, raffia work and clay modelling, particularly during the winter months when outside activities are curtailed by bad weather. Both Carol and Martin are very competent in this field and Martin has found a way of using his bad arm as a kind of clamp, and in this way he manages to secure the material he is using.

Not all our Junior school children go into the Senior or Adult school for here the aim is somewhat different. Most of these pupils have originally attended schools under the normal educational system, or have been to special schools. Their difficulties came to light when called upon to accept the responsibilities of adult life for which their limited intelligence had left them so poorly equipped.

Many of these pupils have come for training through the courts, and the essential aim is to return them eventually to the community better able to cope with the task of becoming responsible and independent citizens. Emphasis is placed on teaching them such things as using the telephone, filling in forms, reading timetables, saving accounts, budgeting, applying for jobs, National Insurance,

income tax, as well as attempting to improve their standard of reading and writing and understanding of money.

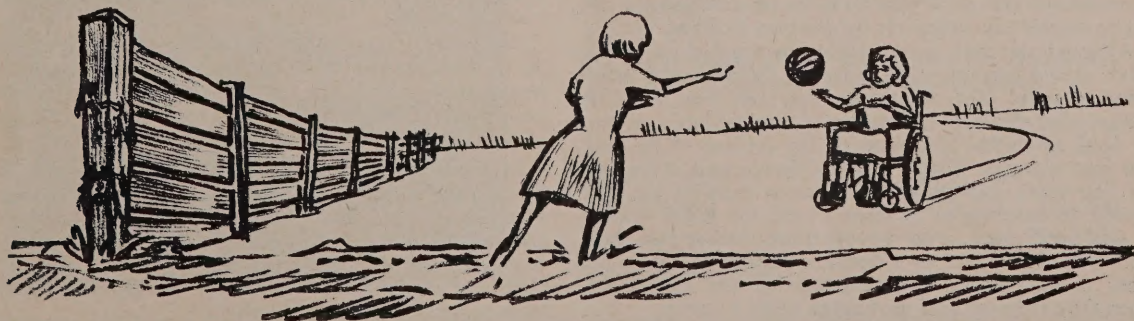
Excursions are made to local factories, the Labour Exchange, the Post Office, etc., and regular discussion groups are held to encourage the pupils to talk about their problems and discuss their plans for the future.

These older pupils often come to school under protest, they have an understandable grudge against society and a determination to be as anti-social as they possibly can be. The teacher's task is not easy; before she can hope to begin teaching she must gain the confidence of her pupils and really convince them that she genuinely desires to help them. School must be interesting and enjoyable and what is more important a stepping stone to independence and freedom.

Once a week the two schools combine for an evening social when all the pupils take part in games, dancing, listening to popular records and generally getting away from ward routine. All are free to participate but it is noticeable that few of the spastic children wish to attend. Carol has been along on one or two occasions but she prefers to stay on the ward and watch television. If we had more staff available for this social club we could probably organise separate activities for such children, but at the moment this is not possible.

Many people feel that centres and schools for the sub-normal should be broken up into smaller units to cater for children with dual disabilities and there are schools now which cater for spastic subnormals, and others for deaf and dumb subnormals and a recent experiment has been tried in a school for mongol children. Obviously there are many advantages in these specialist schools, but I think one of the over-riding advantages of our school is that the pupils seldom see themselves as disabled people but become very aware of the afflictions of others. A simple example of this was demonstrated when we found it possible to communicate with one of our deaf pupils by the sign language, and in a relatively short time many of the other pupils were attempting to contact her by signs which, though incorrectly used, gave her a tremendous amount of pleasure, and gave her that vital link with the others which she so desperately needed.

Carol certainly gets a great deal of petting and affection, particularly from the bigger girls who obviously develop a keen sense of responsibility towards her, and in this way she certainly helps many of them to break down their egocentric behaviour which is so typical of subnormal people. There is no doubt in my mind that they help each other, the less able receive and the more able learn to give, an essential aspect of education at any level.



Dental Health for the Disabled Child

M. N. Naylor, B.Sc., Ph.D., B.D.S., F.D.S., R.C.S.(Eng)

Senior Lecturer, Department of Preventive Dentistry, Guy's Hospital, London S.E.1

GOOD DENTAL HEALTH implies sound teeth and healthy gums and is no less important in the disabled child than the healthy child. Although the rules for good dental health are identical, in many cases the disabled child will require special help and supervision, the amount depending upon the nature and extent of the disability.

The rules for dental health have been enumerated by the Dental Health Committee of the British Dental Association, and a modified version of these is given below:

1. Eat nourishing meals and nothing sweet or sticky in between.
2. Finish meals with raw fruit or vegetable and rinse the mouth with water.
3. Brush teeth and gums after eating, and especially after breakfast and before going to bed. Use a soft toothbrush, with an up-and-down motion.
4. Visit the dentist regularly.

Let us consider each of these rules in turn and attempt to relate their application to the special needs of the disabled child.

Regarding diet, it is imperative that children should avoid the consumption of sweet and sticky foods between meals. In this way the bacteria responsible for producing the acids which initiate dental decay are deprived of their nourishment. There is no harm in children eating sweets, toffees and chocolates, but these must be confined to meal-times only. It is frequently argued that children require between-meal snacks in order to assuage the pangs of hunger. Such between-meal hunger can be avoided by regular balanced nourishing meals of sufficient bulk. If, however, it is necessary for children to take between-meal snacks, they should confine themselves to foods such as apples, pears, oranges or any other fruit or vegetable.

When a child has finished his meal it is important that he should clean his mouth, but since it is not always possible to use a toothbrush, alternative means have to be employed. These include eating deterrent articles of diet, such as apple, carrot or piece of celery, all of which have remarkably efficient cleansing effects. If these foods are not available then it is perfectly possible to cleanse the mouth by vigorous swishing of drinking water between and around the teeth by the action of the cheek and tongue musculature. Of course this latter method frequently cannot be carried out effectively by disabled children.

Although the teeth cannot always be brushed after every meal, on no account must brushing be neglected before going to sleep. This should be done last thing after the going-to-bed drink, to ensure that during the hours of sleep no food debris has stagnated on the surface of the teeth and gum margins. Tooth brushing should start at the time the first tooth appears and as soon as possible the child should be encouraged to learn to use the brush himself. A soft brush used in an up-and-down, rather than horizontal, motion is best as it does not damage the gums and other mouth tissues. Toothbrushes should be replaced when they are worn and the bristles begin to spray.

Disabled children may find it difficult if not impossible to use an ordinary toothbrush by themselves and require the assistance of a parent or nurse. In such circumstances an electrically driven toothbrush can be of inestimable value. Several models have appeared on the British market in recent years, some being powered by the mains supply, but most being dependent upon dry batteries. All have detachable brush heads which are smaller than the usual adult brush, and which operate by an oscillatory, or reversible, rotary action. These instruments are ideal for disabled children since all that needs to be done is for the brush to be placed against the teeth by the child or assistant, the brush set in motion and moved round the various segments of the dentition. The problem of the wrist action required for the up-and-down movement is eliminated.

Regular care from the dentist is especially important for disabled children so that dental disease can be recognised and treated in its early phase. In this way, the child is spared the anxiety and tedium of protracted sessions of extensive restorative dentistry, and the need for extractions of badly decayed teeth, possibly involving the administration of a general anaesthetic. Children should see the dentist as frequently as every four-six months, when any small cavities which may have developed can be filled simply and efficiently.

Further, it has been shown that the number of decay cavities can be reduced by about 60 per cent by providing drinking water containing one part per million fluoride during the time when teeth are developing, i.e. up to the age of about 12 years. Some towns such as Slough in Buckinghamshire have this fluoride content naturally present while others such as Watford, Anglesey and Birmingham add it artificially. In both cases, the beneficial effects are identical.

The Government has agreed to the principle of fluoridation and it is now the responsibility of the local authorities to submit plans to the Minister of Health for his approval.

Fluorides may be applied to the surfaces of the teeth as a concentrated solution but this procedure, carried out by the dentist and repeated at three- or six-monthly intervals is nothing like as effective as fluoridation of the community water supplies.

A few years ago fluoridated toothpastes began to appear on the British markets following enthusiastic preliminary reports from the U.S.A. of their effectiveness. However, until these reports are confirmed independently, the value of fluoridated toothpastes must remain in doubt.

In this short account of ways in which good dental health can be achieved it will have become clear that the establishment of sound habits is essential. If these habits are inculcated as early as possible in life by parental precept and example, and maintained throughout life, the child can expect to carry with him through his life sound teeth supported in healthy gums.

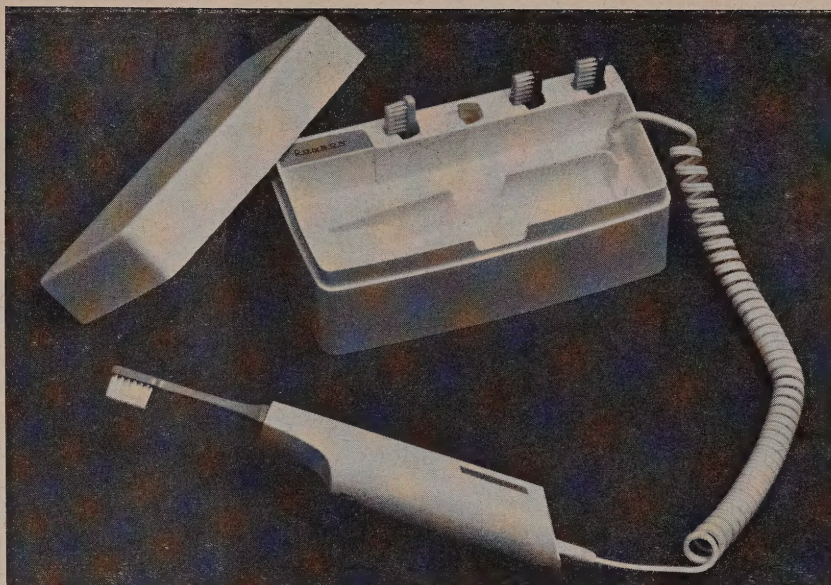
GIMMICKS:

RONSON ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH

This electric toothbrush works at 11,000 strokes a minute and is made by Ronson Limited. As it is operated by four "U" type batteries which last, incidentally, at least four months, it is perfectly safe. It is also much easier to use and softer on the gums than cleaning your teeth by hand.

The Ronson Automatic toothbrush is sold in a tough handsome storage case with a special wall mounting bracket.

The retail price is £6 6s. 0d. but the firm offer a reduction to spastics, bringing the price to £4 16s. 1d. and to this is added an offer of a further reduction of £1 by the Society if the toothbrush is ordered through The Appliance Officer, 12 Park Crescent, London, W.1.



For further information on this or any other Aids and Appliances, write to the Appliance Officer, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London, W.1.

"EVER YOURS"

"EVER YOURS" is a 16 mm film about teeth. It shows some good shots of a trapeze artiste hanging by her teeth and a beaver doing sturdy work on a dam, not to mention attractive models eating cream buns! This film is available free to our Centres, from Bullock & Turner Limited, Film Library Department, Sound Services Limited, Wilton Crescent, London, S.W.19.

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A NEW GROUP SETS OUT

Herefordshire Spastics Society Holds its Inaugural Meeting

THE INAUGURAL MEETING of the Herefordshire Group was held on January 29, 1965, in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant, Col. J. F. MacLean, who had consented to become its President. Ninety-one well-wishers crowded to capacity the waiting room at Hereford Health Centre, lent through the good offices of Dr. J. S. Cookson.

Serious, spirited and moving, the meeting proceeded in an atmosphere of sturdy hope and purpose.

In her opening speech Mrs. Edward Nicholson, in the chair, said: "A few months ago, some of us who have spastic children met to discuss our mutual problems, the upbringing and education of our children and how best to fit them for the society in which they will live, with the maximum of independence according to their several disabilities."

This Inaugural Meeting was the result. "We intend", said Mrs. Nicholson,

"to keep the Health Authority aware of the problems of spastics;

"to press the Education Authority for home tuition for housebound spastics;

"to bring to the notice of both these authorities the need for special transport where necessary for education, occupation or therapy;

"and to provide, with medical approval, such appliances as will ease the lives of the more helpless cases.

"In general we wish to further work being done on a national basis by the Spastics Society, and it is therefore our intention to affiliate with the Spastics Society so that our efforts and theirs can be better co-ordinated for the benefit of spastics in Hertfordshire."

Miss M. R. Morgan, Social Work and Employment Secretary, told the members about some of the work done by the Spastics Society, and one of our films, "What is a Spastic?", was shown. ("I didn't realise the handicap covered so much", said one member of the audience in some dismay.)

The Lord Lieutenant, President of the Group, opened his speech by saying he was sure members of the audience were moved by what they had seen in the film, "and agree that we in Herefordshire should do something about it." He said the national Society's contribution to Local Authority services had been not only material but human, and hoped it would be possible in the not too distant future for Herefordshire to have a centre of its own.

The meeting approved the election of the following

members of an Executive Committee having power to co-opt further members according to need:

Chairman: Mrs. J. M. Nicholson.

Secretary: Miss J. M. Whiting.

Treasurer: Mr. Idris Hier.

Welfare Secretary: Mrs. B. E. Whiting.

Other Members: Dr. R. A. Chandler; Mrs. E. A. Stoakes; Mr. J. T. Arnett; Mrs. D. N. Thompson; Mrs. T. Barnes.

The new Group will number among its patrons, Lady Barbara Bosson and the Lord Bishop of Hereford who have agreed to become Vice-Presidents.

Over cups of tea after the meeting, many parents got together there and then to compare and confide, while others welcomed members from other Groups who had come to wish success to the new Society. We even saw a couple of "Beat" young chaps at the back, dazedly drinking tea and thinking heavily. It would be a good thing for the Group if they came in. Mr. Archibald, the West Midland Regional Officer whom Mrs. Stoakes praised as "a man who has never heard of red tape", was having a good time introducing everybody from abroad to everyone at home.

Two devoted grandmothers, chatting together of their hopes for the spastic children in their families, bore out the enormous range of handicap the Group has to meet under the term "spastic". Shirley can't even sit up, and is blind. She is fed and waited upon in all ways by her mother and granny and, indeed, all the family: she is nine. David is four, and taking his first staggering steps, with difficulty, and saying his first words. What the two grannies had in common was pride in the children and overwhelming love for them. Each individual move Shirley makes is seen and celebrated ("Your daren't put a bit of wool near her, no, she'll have it unpicked in no time and all over everywhere. Yet she can't grip things at all, she used to be able to grip things . . ."), and each advance of David's too. ("His mother's giving his walker to the local hospital, and we're wondering about school, of course there's a year yet . . . he doesn't make sentences yet", said David's grandmother, carefully not boasting.)

One granny went off to get Shirley's fish, and the other settled down to read "Every 8 Hours" and wait for her son-in-law, unperturbed among all the excitement. While the new Group set out on its good, hard road to make life better for Shirley, and David, and the other spastic children in their care.

Christmas Cards

Review and Preview

by John Kellett

THANKS TO EVERYBODY'S co-operation, the sales target for 1964 of 7½ million Christmas cards sold, was just achieved before Christmas.

Because of the fabulous hot summer of 1964, the General campaign made a noticeably slower start than in 1963, and, indeed, during the month of September and early part of October, the sales were less than in the same period of 1963.

Thanks to Group co-operation, initial orders were placed early in 1964 and this meant that a steady flow of cards could be distributed.

New Premises and Staff

During 1964 Spastics Cards Limited moved from their Ealing premises to a new 10,000 square feet warehouse and office building at Iver, Bucks. This move was considerably delayed, and we only just moved in time. When September arrived, only two people who had seen a Christmas card in 1963 were still with the organisation and, in point of fact, a team of nearly 70 new personnel joined the Company during the course of the programme. As the programme developed, delays were experienced with British Road Services and special deliveries were made by our own van to certain northern areas. We hope to extend this service this year.

New Lines

A number of new lines were introduced in 1964 and all sold extremely well, including the "Views of Britain" Calendar, the Advent Calendar for children, and an attractive glitter Parcel Tag. We hope that samples of the 1965 range will be available during March, which will give nine months of useful selling time.

Business House orders once again provided a useful sales outlet and the progress which the 1959 Group of Charities (of which we are a member) made in its combined ventures is a most encouraging sign for the future.

1965

A number of staff have been retained in 1965, and with the new premises and a keen and efficient team, the sky will be the limit for 1965. The target will be 10,000,000 cards sold, and this will be achieved if everyone gives his active support.

It is important that we explore every possible sales avenue to the full, including retail outlets. Groups will be sent Sales Promotion and general information at more frequent intervals, to help them promote sales.



One of the new Spastic-printed Christmas Cards, from the 1965 range



The above child suspension chair is made by A & P TOOLS & PRODUCTS LTD, Fordwater Trading Estate, Ford Road, Chertsey, Surrey, and costs £7 17s. 6d. The Matron of White Lodge Centre says it is very popular.

WATER CURE

by Margaret Denby

Reprinted by kind permission of "The Guardian"

THOSE OF US who experienced it still talk about the atmosphere that was found in the air raid shelters, and elsewhere too, during the war. The feeling of dangers shared and common aims which broke down those awful barriers of class, creed, and race we human beings erect to separate ourselves from each other. We really had something then, we lament sadly, but we've lost it again now. And we regret that we haven't, somehow or other, been able to preserve it.

I have found it again. I have been in a wheelchair for several years. Usually I live in Geneva but have come to stay in this country for a few months. I thought I remembered reading something, some time ago, about it being possible for handicapped people to swim in London. So, soon after getting here, I went along to my local town hall to ask. I was given a brochure with details of the various clubs you can join if you live in Kensington and there, sure enough, it said: "Swimming Club for the Physically Handicapped."

Rather fearfully I rang up the number indicated. "Certainly," said a business-like but friendly voice, "just come along on Friday at seven. Bring your doctor's certificate with you. We like to help you folks all we can." I gulped a bit at that last sentence but, anyway, it was worth a try.

So I presented myself at Kensington's enormous red brick Victorian swimming baths. I felt diffident and rather unsure of myself but determined to go through with it if they'd let me.

I needn't have worried. From the moment of wheeling inside the place I was swept up in the general atmosphere of tremendous friendliness, cheerfulness, and—what we had in the war—all being in it together. "What's your name?" asked someone who had enough air of authority to suggest she was more or less in charge. "Mine's Mary." "Margaret," I said. From that moment, it seemed, everyone knew me as Margaret. And I found myself quickly getting to know the others, Valerie—and Maud—and Bert.

As far as I can make out membership of the club is free. What gets you in is your presence there and your doctor's certificate. I got out my purse to pay as I went in but the cash desk was closed. The club is run by a woman doctor but she is very unobtrusive, though there for those who need her. Nobody fusses or bothers you. Stalwart young men help you into the water and kind young women swim with you if you can't be left alone. At least, so it seemed. In fact the helpers are just about as mixed a bunch of people as are we handicapped swimmers. They are all volunteers, giving their time, their energy, and their ability to help, in the most unsentimental and straightforward way. There isn't a trace of do-goodism nor, on the other side, of "Aren't we brave overcoming our handicaps like this?"

We handicapped swimmers have two things in common—we are disabled and we want to swim. Apart from that we are all different. Every age from six to sixty, both sexes, several races, every sort of background. We all look funny in our bathing suits I suppose, but nobody notices. When you all look funny, looking funny is what is normal. There is a woman with multiple sclerosis and another who was bombed during the war and has completely stiff legs. There is a blind man, a little girl with only one leg, several spastics. We swim and we talk and we laugh and we are given hot drinks. The atmosphere is very normal, and at the same time tremendously cheering and exhilarating. It's marvellous.

One's faith in human beings is often shaken. You read and hear about such dreadful things done by human beings to each other. You ask yourself. "Is it worth worrying about whether we humans survive or not? Trying to do anything to ensure that we do?" I know I'm oversimplifying but at least part of the answer can be found in this swimming club for the physically handicapped. And it's "Yes."

LEARNING PROBLEMS OF THE CEREBRALLY PALSID

Edited by J. A. Loring

Includes the principal papers of The Spastics Society's Study Group held at Pembroke College, Oxford, 1964.

182 pages

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Write or telephone Miss Styles (Matron), or the Holiday Organiser, 12 Park Crescent, W.I., or your local Group Secretary or Welfare Officer. Reasonable terms.

Spastic Who Never Gave Up Is Top Businessman

by a "Belfast Telegraph" Reporter

A 37-YEAR-OLD IRISHMAN who has been a spastic from birth, was unable to read until he was 12 and was on National Assistance until the age of 26, has managed to build up a successful retail confectionery business as well as being company secretary for a large confectionery manufacturer.

He is Gerry McCann, of Martello Park, Craigavad, Belfast, one of a family of six children. He attributes his success to the sensible attitude taken by his parents.

"I was never molly-coddled, and in spite of the fact that I could never walk and had only the use of one hand, I was always expected to stand up for myself in rows with my brothers and sisters.

"Although I never went to school and spent a great deal of time in hospital, I always had a large circle of friends and they helped me all along the line. I call them the Gerry McCann Volunteer Squad.

"One thing I learnt was that if I wasn't self-conscious with people, then they were not self-conscious with me."

He looked for his first job when his father died. "I was 26 and I knew that the family depended on me to bring in some money.

"My first job was as a records clerk in a shirt factory. I took a correspondence course in English and commerce, and eight years ago I got a job as bookkeeper with the Golden Ball confectionery company, of which I am now company secretary.

"With my first £100 capital I applied for a Corporation shop at Knocknagoney Avenue, and then I took a second shop at Annadale Crescent. At that time I must have been working a 19-hour day—running the shops in my spare time."

Without having to borrow money he was soon running a chain of five shops, had bought a new house for his mother and was travelling around to supervise his business in his invalid tricycle. (He is vice-chairman of the Disabled Drivers' Association in Northern Ireland.)

A win of £1,149 on the pools enabled him to buy a second house for himself at Martello Park and he married the manageress of one of his shops. His wife Mary helps him run his business. They have been married just over a year.

Routine

His working life has settled down to a routine. He has given up three of his shops as he says that "two are quite enough to keep on with my job." But he would like to be able to do more to help other disabled people like himself.



(Photograph: Courtesy, Belfast Telegraph)

Mr. Gerry McCann. "It takes a disabled person to understand the problems of others", he says

He says: "It takes a disabled person really to understand the problems of others in the same situation. I would like to see disabled people taking more of a lead in this."

He vividly describes his attempts to grapple with simple problems like learning to read and write: "My father said 'Break the words up into syllables and you'll find it easier.'

"The first word I ever read was in a newspaper heading during the war. It was the word 'battle' and I can remember being terrified during the blitz and looking at this word and repeating it again and again.

"I read comics first and then schoolbooks, and later I started getting books from the library, and that was like lifting a veil. I went on reading all the time."

Watford Makes History

Borough Council Scores a Notable First on Behalf of the Disabled

RECENTLY Watford Borough Council passed an all-party resolution that, in brief: planning permission should be given only to those plans giving suitable access to the disabled; that the Borough Engineer draw the attention of all owners of public buildings outside the Council's control to the importance of such access; and that the Borough Engineer report on the possibility of modifying all existing public buildings under his jurisdiction.

The Central Council for the Disabled has been campaigning on the subject of the inaccessibility of public places to the disabled for some time. A spokesman said:

"We are delighted with Watford's lead. They are the first Local Authority to see the light, although the Archbishop of Westminster has given somewhat similar instructions concerning buildings under his control. Let us hope that other Local Authorities take note so that the practice snowballs.

"Remember that the disabled, which include, of course, the elderly infirm, run into millions. There are some 600,000 war disabled, 80,000 seriously injured on the roads annually and 20,000 wheelchairs issued by the Ministry of Health annually. The ratio of disabled to able-bodied is therefore much higher than people think and frankly it is a disgrace that steps, narrow doorways, lack of handrails and so on in our public buildings is as good as a notice 'Disabled—Keep Out'. The Central Council for the Disabled is always ready to give detailed advice, architectural or otherwise, on the subject."



Part of the Council's campaign—a stand at the Churches, Schools and Youth Clubs Exhibition held in London recently, which showed many examples of both good and bad design practice in building, and of detailed fittings



There are some £80 here, they tell me, all in pennies, and this is a part of this year's collection for spastics at The Shrewsbury Arms, Mickleford Trafford, Chester. "Albert Tatlock" collected £105 in the spring of 1963. "Elsie Tanner" collected £110 last spring. We do not yet know who will do the honours this year but Mr. and Mrs. Dai Davies and their customers hope to have £150 ready. We are most grateful to them

There is Room for You

by
John Prasher

THE PHOTOGRAPH BELOW was taken in spring last year at Windsor Castle. What was on?

Well, every year on the Sunday nearest to St. George's Day, the Queen holds a review here. She inspects representatives of Queen's Scouts and Commissioners and takes the salute at a grand march-past of hundreds of scouts from all over the country and from the Commonwealth.

Then all gather in the historic St. George's Chapel for an annual service of worship and re-dedication.

Handicapped Scouts are not forgotten on this occasion. They come from far, from Scotland, Wales, Yorkshire, London and the South. Some of them are in wheelchairs as you see and they suffer from various disabilities, muscular dystrophy, polio effects, cerebral palsy.

They have two things in common. They are Boy Scouts and they have TRIED. Some of them may have difficulty in tying the simplest knot. That doesn't matter. They have understood the Scout Law, they fulfil it to the best of their ability and they GO ON TRYING. Most of them

have secured some Proficiency Badges. Tests for these may be modified to suit special requirements, though nothing is made too easy. The principle of the original test is maintained, it is the techniques that may be altered.

Some of the boys go camping and have a whale of a time, looked after by brother Scouts whose efforts are beyond praise.

Prince Philip spoke personally to each of these lads at Windsor. He recognised their efforts. For each of them it was a red-letter day, the memory of which will spur them on to greater things.

There is room for many more spastics in the Scouting movement.

There is room for YOU.

Address your enquiries to:—

The Headquarters Commissioner for Handicapped Scouts,

The Boy Scouts Association,

25 Buckingham Palace Road,
LONDON, S.W.1.



(Photograph: Courtesy P. A. Reuter)

The Duke of Edinburgh inspects handicapped Scouts. John Prasher, author of this article, is fourth from the far end talking to the Duke

Parties

by

Ann Clifford Smith

Children at the Spastics Centre party, Halifax, given by the Social Club of Messrs. Baldwin & Walker Ltd.



(Photograph: Courtesy Halifax Courier)

PARTIES ARE the prerogative of every child. They are to be looked forward to with eager anticipation and to be enjoyed both physically and spiritually.

Unfortunately this is not always the case. So often those who are giving the party fail to achieve this end. It may be that they are unable to look back to their own childhood and to remember the essentials, but more often it is the very earnestness of the desire to make the party a success that brings its own partial failure. The organisers are too apprehensive and for this reason cannot participate fully in the fun. It is the one-ness of both hosts and guests that is the hall-mark of a successful party.

Especially is this true when handicapped children are the guests. The hosts are so eager to provide a happy time, that their very anxiety sets a restraint on all. Instead of a party, it becomes an occasion when the visitors are set carefully on one side, and overwhelmed with loving care and attention. This is just what the spastic child does not want; he longs above all to be drawn into the group, and while he may enjoy the good things to eat, and the entertainment provided, yet part of him is not satisfied because he is made to feel somehow different.

I came to the Thomas Delarue School from the local Girls' Technical School. My former colleagues were intensely interested in my new post, and they began to look around for means of helping. A few of my friends suggested that they would like to organise a party for a group of the spastic students, but they were afraid and didn't quite know how to do it. I reassured them that spastic children only needed treating like normal children and encouraged them to go ahead. So they took things a step further and I was invited to meet a group of form mistresses and together we talked out the pros and cons, and it was decided to approach the girls.

The girls were only too eager to participate. Even before I left, they had plied me with dozens of questions and now

they were quite willing to forgo a party for themselves and to contribute for a party for new students.

It was decided that from the fourth years a group of about twenty girls should entertain a corresponding number of our students. All the girls of that year contributed and there was keen competition to act as the hostesses. Some went to great pains cooking all kinds of most tempting delicacies, others decorated the hall most attractively, and still others prepared a short entertainment.

Before the actual date of the party, Mr. Chappell had joined me in a final meeting with the staff and we got down to the planning of the programme. With our insistence on normality, several of the usual party games were included, and Mr. Chappell kindly consented to act as M.C.

That first party can never be forgotten. The girls rose to the occasion and what perfect hostesses they were! They ran out to meet us, helped with the chairs, took off coats and immediately everyone was at home and all were chatting together. The girls even helped to feed the students who couldn't manage to feed themselves, and they did it so naturally and easily that there was no embarrassment at all.

The games were a riot and no-one was left out. I think the girls enjoyed them as much as our students. Our students came away thrilled and happy. Never had they had such a party! Moreover, they had learnt a useful lesson in social acceptability.

The follow-up was even more pleasing, for correspondence sprang up between the various members of the two schools, and lasting friendships. Some of the girls visited the school and took the students out or even entertained them in their own homes.

We in our turn, were able to invite back groups of girls and the exchange of parties has become a yearly event to which we all look forward.

FREE TRIP TO SUNSHINE HOLIDAYS ABROAD For Sherrards Trainees

Two 18-year-old spastic trainees at Sherrards will be holidaying abroad this year—all expenses paid.

Lucky recipients of the free Continental holiday are Frank Heffer, of Little Dawley, Shropshire, and Robert Pearson, of Sleaford, Lincs. They are the first two spastics to be chosen for a "Bachelor Holiday" under a scheme for the handicapped run by Y.T.C., a non-profit making travel club which operates from Liverpool.

Holiday vouchers for the two lads were accepted by Mr. Jack Howarth (Albert Tatlock of "Coronation Street") at a recent Y.T.C. function in Liverpool, which was also attended by Mr. J. A. Loring, Assistant Director Services.

Y.T.C., which stand for "Your Travel Club", started 13 years ago when Mr. Lewis Edwards, J.P., a social worker in Liverpool, took a number of his boys' club members for a holiday in Switzerland. By squeezing them all into his 1922 car and persuading influential Swiss friends to organise receptions and hospitality, he kept the costs down to £10 for a fortnight.

The results were so rewarding that Y.T.C. was formed. In the early days it catered only for youth. Today its members come from all walks of life and from every age group.



Mr. Jack Pearson, Director of Y.T.C., presents TV actor Jack Howarth with holiday vouchers for two free holidays in the sun for spastics trainees, Frank Heffer and Robert Pearson

The "Young Companions Group", who form part of the organisation, have taken a particular interest in the disabled and collected enough money to send some handicapped members abroad last summer.

This year it is the turn of Frank Heffer and Robert Pearson. The choice of destination is left to them—and it ranges from a couple of weeks in Rome or at the Italian Riviera, to a fortnight at the Costa Brava or in Portugal.

G. Paton.



The guests arrive: Miss M. R. Morgan from Park Crescent is welcomed in

N.W. LONDON SPASTICS PERFORM 'BLITHE SPIRIT'

"Turned out again?" became the cry of our Monday voluntary helpers, quite bewildered by our sudden concern for them to have an outside coffee break.

But! we had a secret, plus an ambition to justify our supervisor's faith in us, the day she remarked "I wonder if we can do a play?"—We could!—and we did!

We presented our performance of "Blithe Spirit" suitably adapted, to our helpers and committee, and until the curtain went up, the secret was still ours.

Each member played a part, truly giving of his or her best. Our first dress rehearsal convinced us—we not only had enthusiasm, we had talent!

We hope Noel Coward would forgive the remark "it's much funnier than the original". One and all proclaimed it an unbelievable achievement.

Having conquered our first-night jitters, success completely went to our heads, and in answer to great demand, we gave a second performance for parents and friends. Its success was indeed reward for all the effort—and what joy we had, to do something for others.

Our drama group is well established, complete with our own theme song, and hopes are high to hear once again the magic word "Encore", in the near future.



The cast take a bow

Opportunity Holiday Home

by Miss R. R. Stroyan, Scottish Council for the Welfare of Spastics

I WONDER how many people who have taken spastic children on holiday have faced the problem that I and my colleagues faced for years? "Where shall we take the children for camp this year?" We in Edinburgh have been arranging holidays for parties of spastic children for a good number of years. School camps, day schools, boarding schools Y.M.C.A. Hostels, private houses—we tried them all, with varying success and different snags to meet with every year. "If only we could do this", "if only we could have that", "if only we had a house we could come back to". This sort of remark we were always making.

Found!

One year while on holiday with a crowd of our youngsters in an attractive part of Lanarkshire we spotted it! A large empty house, standing in a wild but fairly level garden, with the sun shining on it. The whole feeling of the place was welcoming. What a chance! What a place! What an opportunity! We looked round and could see possibilities, and imagine the old house filled with young people. Not too many steps, sufficient room downstairs for dormitories, easy access to the garden, lots to be done but not much that it would take a long time and a great deal of money.

After some months of consideration and planning the Opportunity Holiday Trust was formed and the house eventually purchased. The Trust will rent the House to Organisations dealing with handicapped children and young people of all types. Some essential work was done and in the summer of 1963 a tentative start was made. Several parties of young spastics from Edinburgh made use of the House, and a few other Organisations also felt their way with holiday projects that summer.

Local Kindness

The building still needed work. However the great kindness and consideration of the people in the village of Lamington helped to make things easy, as did kindly shopkeepers in the neighbouring town of Biggar and friendly farmers in the district. Everyone seemed determined to make the project a success.

Improvements and First Trials

During the winter some more small improvements were undertaken—an additional water tank added, more electricity introduced, etc., and in the summer of 1964 more bookings were accepted. No advertising had been undertaken, but the "Bush Telegraph" led to bookings by the following Organisation: The Scottish Society for Mentally Handicapped Children; Scottish and Danish Handicapped Rangers; Edinburgh Spastics Association; the Border Spastics Association; The Larnarkshire Spastics Society; Glasgow Handicapped Guides; Edinburgh Handicapped Scouts; The Edinburgh Epilepsy Society and Handicapped Children from St. Joseph's Convent, Rosewell, Midlothian. Quite a representative crowd for one summer! Students from Edinburgh University and pupils from Edinburgh

Schools have helped in decorating and renovating the House.

There is accommodation for about 25-28 people with two five-bedded rooms on the ground floor. There is no lift but showers, wash-basins and lavatories are also on ground level, as are the large kitchen and common room. There are several bedrooms and three bathrooms upstairs. Parties making use of the House bring their own helpers and cook and are free to make use of all the facilities in the House. As the village of Lamington is only tiny and the town of Biggar is some six miles distant, parties really require to have some form of transport of their own. The bus service is not very frequent but shops deliver supplies. The nearby countryside affords many lovely picnic spots and the river Clyde is only a few fields away. The equipment in the House does *not* include a television set, the Trustees feeling that people on holiday there should be able to make their own amusements and not have to rely on the canned variety!

Should any of the readers of this article require more information about the scheme I shall be happy to let them have it. In the meantime you can visualise this old House packed with children who surely deserve the opportunity of a real country holiday without restrictions.

West Bromwich Inaugural

Fantastic Attendance at New Group's First Meeting

NEARLY 200 PEOPLE, a record for a Group Inaugural, attended the meeting which launched the new West Bromwich and District Spastics Society last month. Among them were the Mayor, Councillor F. G. Phillips, J.P., and the Mayoress; Alderman Sower, whose interest in the physically handicapped is well known locally; Councillor Wenlock, whose principal interest is Welfare, and the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Byrant. The Dudley Group's Chairman and Secretary attended to wish the new Group well.

The Group's Patron, Mr. W. H. L. Harrison, made a most generous donation of £500 from himself and Mrs. Harrison, and there is no doubt that the interest and wisdom which Mr. Harrison brings to his role as Patron guarantees serious and steady success to the Group's work, together with the vigorous contributing efforts of members, in particular, Mr. and Mrs. J. Carroll, who have done so much towards the founding of the Society and are now its Chairman and Secretary.

Since January 28, the day of the Inaugural, one of the parent members has already raised £40, and Dr. Davies, Paediatrician at Hallam Hospital, has promised her support. "We've got off to a swinging start", says Mrs. Carroll.

Working Holiday No. 1

by W. M. C. Hargreaves

IT HAD NOT BEEN DONE BEFORE. A whole hotel handed over completely to 17 spastic men and women, except that is, for the chef, and even he had his day off on Sunday. Due to the kindness of the Colwall Court Management Committee it was made possible for us to hold our first "Do-it-yourself" holiday in their lovely premises. The staff were asked to do nothing: everything was to be done by the holidaymakers themselves. They were to do their own bed-making, washing-up, table-laying, vegetable preparations and shopping, and arrange their own outings and leisure-time activities.

The first task was to get up in the morning. Robina Ross saw to that—the writer has never been awakened so effectively before; it is a wonder there is a bedroom door left on its hinges—a slight tap?—more like a roll of drums! Then there came *Work*, divided into three sections. The first section comprised cooking duties under Miss Sheila Gould, already very experienced in this as she had cooked at the '62 Club Camp last year. This section was responsible for the preparation of all vegetables, planning of menus, serving of all meals and preparation and serving of morning coffee and afternoon tea and the evening hot drink. The second section, under Miss Robina Ross, one of the original '62 Club members, was responsible for all the washing-up, the shopping and the planning of the social programme. The third section, under the writer, was responsible for keeping the whole hotel clean.

"Please, the hoover won't work". Suzanne Davids of Maidstone was the one in trouble this time. After careful investigation it was discovered that she had forgotten to switch it on! Most heartrending of the lot was the shout of Barry Shiels, of London Colney, Herts., busy with mop and pail—"They've trodden all over my nice clean floor!" Sheila Brown of York, was so good at organising the washing-up that it took noticeably longer when she was on other work.

The two in wheelchairs, Barbara Hunt from Luton, and Ralph Ince from London, proved expert in the preparation of vegetables although we were all a little afraid there would be nothing left for lunch when once they had finished sampling their own work. The highlight was a visit to Eastbourne on the Monday. The day dawned bright and sunny. After all work was finished, by 11.0 a.m., Glanville David from Bristol, and Sheila Brown, were sent on ahead to reserve tables at a restaurant. Beryl Woolley from Chester was dispatched to the station to buy rail tickets and we were all duly met by Sheila and Glanville at Eastbourne and had a most wonderful time, not the least being a splendid meal of either roast chicken or steak, accompanied by drinks of one's choice.

On the last evening, we all had a very happy time helping Michael La Touche to celebrate his 21st birthday, when all the holidaymakers pooled their money and purchased CHAMPAGNE. Altogether, a most wonderful time was had by all, some even daring to brave swimming for the first time in the beautiful indoor heated swimming pool.

Our grateful thanks must go to Mr. and Mrs. Marsh, who pretended to take not the slightest interest in anything that was going on and no doubt kept their fingers crossed that they would have a hotel left, at the end of it all! To show their real appreciation, the holidaymakers clubbed together and presented them with a delightful calendar.

W. M. C. Hargreaves,
Club Organiser.



For the rest of the day, they walked on the ceiling . . .



"I'll hang on to the money. You try to make sense of this shopping list . . ."

(IV) SPASTICS' CONFERENCE

by J. L. Wood



THE POSSIBILITY of a conference of spastics to take place in Britain is exciting indeed: we have all heard the views of the various consultants on our physical and psychological problems, and the idea of being on the warm end of the stethoscope is, in itself, stimulating.

So I do not agree with Mr. Brett's proposals for an agenda: if we are to have *every* session *led* by an able-bodied person, we may as well attend an Assessment Course and be done with it: excellent though the Assessment Courses may be, they do not constitute a conference. I believe any spastic wishing to take part in a conference should be capable of composing a Paper of 1,000 to 2,500 words on some problem affecting the handicapped in general and the spastic in particular—and be ready to defend his ideas if they come under fire.

I agree wholeheartedly with the idea of inviting delegates from other major organisations for the welfare of the disabled; for too long C.P. has been confused with M.D., even among the physically handicapped, and if the mountain will not speak to Mohammed, it is up to Mohammed to invite the mountain to come and listen to him.

Three days would hardly be long enough for a national conference of this nature, with all the problems of communication, etc., which will doubtless arise, and for an international conference, ten days would be nearer the ideal.

International?

And there is a strong argument for making it international. How much do we know, for instance, of the C.P.'s conditions and problems in Europe, or Scandinavia? I know one lady with a vast experience of the C.P. problem in Sweden, who is eager to attend such a conference, and I am sure she would have much value to add to it, but the heavy cost of travelling would make it extremely uneconomic to come for a mere three days.

If I may return to the subject of an agenda, when the recent Gothenburg Conference opened, only three addresses had been planned: the rest—about seven sessions—was left to the spastics to fill in. We were challenged; we accepted; I think we succeeded. Challenge us again and see what happens.



DR. COLIN COOKE, O.B.E., J.P., M.A., LL.D., has been elected Chairman of the Society's Consultative Council.

Dr. Cooke comes from South Lancashire, and was for some years a journalist on the staff of the "Manchester Guardian". He has been a Fellow and Senior Bursar of Magdalen College, Oxford, since 1944 and a member of the Oxford City Council since 1947.

DELARUE THINKS OUTWARDS

Students at the Delarue School have collected £9 1s. 6d. for Oxfam, with a further £1 5s. 6d. contributed by Mr. Hayes' Woodwork and Metalwork class, the proceeds of small repairs undertaken.

Another collection was made for Dr. Barnardo's Homes, and £3 was collected and sent in the form of cakes, sweets, cigarettes, etc., to some of the Borstal boys.

ONE MORE PUSH!

The Norfolk and Norwich Spastics Society, East Dereham Branch, has collected through the generosity of all groups, one and a quarter million Green Shield Stamps towards its target of two million, for a van to take spastics to and from the centre and on little trips.

If you will help again, they will just make it. Closing date is April 9. Send your stamps now—don't wait until you have filled a book—and help them close the gap. By this method of purchase they will save nearly two thousand pounds on the cost of the van—IF they have their two million stamps.

So—one last push!

TIME...

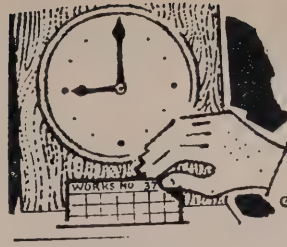
It is no good sitting back in a corner waiting for life to come to one. Life is like a train, which one must catch as it whizzes past, there isn't another one if one misses it. And one must have some destination in mind, even if one never reaches that destination.

At the same time it is important not to let the objective in the future loom so large that it obliterates what is happening in the present. Life is what is happening today, not just what is going to happen in the course of time.

Doreen James, Prested.



'62 CLUB



SPASTICS AT WORK

This line drawing is the winner of our competition for a pictorial column heading: it was sent in by Miss Lise Bayer, who wins five gns. for the Nottingham '62 Club

SOUTHEND '62

AS THE SOUTHEND '62 CLUB is now firmly established, I thought that you might like to have news of us.

We have Miss Jessie Matthews as our Patron. We are also the first Club to be registered as an independent Club with the local authority.

We meet fortnightly at the New Church Hall, Southend, where we recently held our first A.G.M., which our President, Mr. W. M. C. Hargreaves, attended.

At the A.G.M. the year's work was reviewed. You may like to know of some of our activities during that year. We started meeting at the Hall in May, and since that time the Club has gone from strength to strength.

We held a fancy dress night. This proved most successful. There were a Chinaman, Princess Graceful and Prince Charming, and, of course, there was also a Beatle! We have also had the usual film shows and talks.

In November, we held a "Guy Fawkes Draw", and the highlight of the year was the Christmas celebration. This was a Christmas supper followed by a concert. The Committee arranged that each member of the Club should receive a Christmas gift, and a meal was prepared for 22 people.

Apart from helping our members, we offer friendship and help to any other handicapped person. We often have friends from the Arundel to our meetings, and sometimes, they go home eager to join the '62 Club in their town. From time to time we invite other handicapped Clubs to join us. Some of the people that have joined us this way, have become members of the Club.

We have ordered a record player, and have received a gift of over 100 records from a friend of the Club.

The officers of the Southend '62 Club are already great friends with their opposite numbers in the London '62 Club. In May, last year, I was the guest speaker at the London '62 A.G.M. I enjoyed this very much indeed. In July the compliment was returned, when the Secretary of the London '62 Club visited Southend.

For those who are beginning the hard struggle of starting a '62 Club, the Southend '62 Club have this advice.

Never give up however hard the going may be. The first year IS hard, there are times when it does not seem worth the work that is put in to starting the Club.

However, you will look back with pride once the first year is over. The sense of achievement is tremendous once the Club has become truly established.

Janet Evans,
Honorary Secretary.

Thomas Thael from Staveley, who is leaving school in July, has been offered a permanent job in the spray painting shop of a local garage, after successfully completing a trial period.

Roger Tibbles from Croydon, who was a member of the Assessment Course Cruise in March, 1964, is employed as a trainee instrument assembler by a manufacturing concern in Beckenham.

Alwyn Todhunter from Workington, who trained at Sherrards, is employed on a trial basis as a capstan operator by a local firm.

Michael Tritton from Ventnor, Isle of Wight, has commenced a trial period of employment in a B.B.C. post room.

Madeleine Tubbs from Luton, who trained at Sherrards is employed as an Addressograph operator by Laporte Chemicals in Luton.

Patricia Tucker from Bristol, who attended a recent assessment course in Devon, is employed as a sewing machinist by a local firm.

Lynn Turner from Manchester is doing temporary work there in Woolworths.

Joyce Waite from Lincoln is working whilst awaiting a vacancy at Sherrards.

Philip Waugh from Burgess Hill is working in a local factory whilst awaiting a vacancy at Sherrards.

NEWS FROM

CHESTER OFFICE TRAINING CENTRE

On Friday, January 29, we said "good-bye" to Joanna Craig-Waller who left to take up employment in Salisbury. We shall miss the willing help which she was always ready to give to all and sundry and we wish her good luck.

Over the Christmas holiday, Pat Lee, who trained at our centre and has been working in Chester for some months, was transferred to her home town of Leeds. She was a leading light, a member of the Youth Club Committee and conducted the meetings so competently and well that she was co-opted on to the Committee of the Chester Spastics Association. We miss her trim little figure walking up the drive every Wednesday afternoon (her half day); she came to act as Chairman to the Committee of the Youth Club.

Each Friday evening several of our trainees go along to the swimming baths at Connahs Quay. Members of the Connahs Quay Swimming Club and the Red Cross teach them to swim and the Chester Round Table provide transport there and back. They spend an hour in the water; those who can swim are allowed "to go it alone."

Joyce Elliott.



SLOW MOTION

Chapter III— LEAVING SCHOOL

by Ann Pearce

OUR HEADMISTRESS was very keen that we did something positive with our lives when we left school: she started thinking about our future well ahead with this in mind. Miss Lake did not agree with the girls leaving school and just going home. She did her best to get us working either at home or in a centre for young people and this was not easy.

At the age of about 15 years I began to realise the end of my school days was in sight. What was I going to do? Would I be able to earn my living in some way, or would I have to leave school without anything definite in sight? What about a fuller life? I was growing up now and looking toward adult things. What opportunity was there for a girl physically handicapped as I was and other girls like me to enjoy the fun and good things life had to offer to our more fortunate sisters? Often my friends and I would talk about this and I can remember other girls saying with confidence they would get a job and live at home despite their handicap. School days were over and that was the end of rules and regulations for us. It was quite natural to feel like this. I was no exception; having been away from home so long I now looked toward my

home and family as something that would figure more permanently in my life. But things just don't work out as we plan and eventually after a lot of thought and discussion I had to accept that this idea wasn't a good one at all. If I had gone home to live all that I had gained during my school years would have been lost. I still needed treatment, and because of handicap the prospects of a daily job, or working at home on my own, would be quite impossible. So for a time at any rate I knew I would have to continue to make my life away from home.

My mother and Miss Lake now started the long struggle to get me into a working centre. So often we met the old story "no room". Or sometimes I was too handicapped to be able to cope with the work at that particular centre.

Although I shouldn't still have been at school under the circumstances the Education Authorities gave permission for me to stay a while longer. During the summer term I was granted another interview, this time at Coombe Farm also in Surrey. Coombe Farm is a Residential Centre for young spastics, 45 girls and boys. That was about all I knew of the place although I had heard people talking about it. Two of the "Palace" girls had already gone there.

MARCH DIARY

WHAT'S HAPPENING	WHERE	WHEN
Employment Assessment Course 37	Colwall Court	1st - 12th
Study Group on "The Development of Centres for Adult Spastics" ...	Staff Training Centre, Wallingford	6th - 7th
Working Holiday No. 2 (for Spastics)	Alvechurch	6th - 13th
Meeting between Regions and Groups Co-ordinating Committee and 30 Hon. Officers of Groups	Park Crescent	13th
Public meeting towards forming new Group, under Chairmanship of Mayor	Salisbury	16th
Work Centre: Managers' Meeting	Park Crescent	17th
Hitchin Group Ball	Hitchin	19th
Conference on the Development of Local Services in the N.E. Region ...	Leeds	20th
Laying of Foundation Stone of Extensions, by Mr. J. D. Herd	Irton Hall	21st
Employment Assessment Course 38	Arundel Hotel	22nd - 30th
Nottingham Group Ball	Nottingham	25th
Western Regional Conference and Election of Western Regional Advisory Committee	Exeter	27th
Seminar on Special Education	Amersfoort, Netherlands	28th - 3rd April
Christmas Cards—1965 Samples being sent to Groups—available on request to all others		Late March

Letters to the Editor

WHO WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED

Dear Editor,

I wonder if any of you reading this letter now celebrated your birthday on the same day as Sir Winston Churchill? I did. Ten years ago I thought it would be a good idea to send Sir Winston a birthday card. Of course I did not expect any reply. The letter which I dictated to my mother was signed and posted on my behalf, and I forgot all about it until about three weeks later, when my mother came rushing excitedly into my bedroom and told me that I had received a personal reply to my letter. I could not believe my ears, but it was true—I had received this letter from him. It said:

"Dear Linton Edwards,

Thank you very much for your birthday card. I hope you had a nice birthday.

*Yours sincerely,
Winston Churchill."*

To see that it was written in his own handwriting pleased me all the more. I shall always treasure that letter as long as I live.

I thought it would be appropriate to write this short item about Sir Winston Churchill as he was a man whom people will always remember.

Linton Edwards.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Dear Editor,

The rather sad letter of Mr. Edgar Poole in your February issue requires an answer humane but unsentimental.

The ideal state of affairs regarding physical treatment for cerebral palsy may be stated thus:

Physiotherapy should be instituted at as early an age as possible, six months of age is a perfectly practical time to start. It should be undertaken by a therapist competent to deal with such cases (this implies special training, as the basic physiotherapy syllabus can only touch on the subject). Parents should be instructed in the handling of the child, with particular attention to posture.

Treatment should be continued for as long as it is *actively* beneficial. This may be for many years, it may be only two or three. In patients with severe mental retardation (in my opinion always a more important criterion than

any degree of physical disability), the point of discontinuance must be reached sooner, and although active physiotherapy may be halted, parents who have been well indoctrinated into methods of treatment can thereafter do as much as any physiotherapist—more than most; but expert advice should *always* be available.

It should be remembered (but alas, is often not realised), that walking is not the most important motor activity. Decent sitting positions, with good balance, having the arms and hands free to work independently, are much more important. Acquired deformities must always start with bad posture, and premature or badly patterned walking will (I am being unequivocal) *increase* spasticity and deformity. Sensible handling will minimise and may preclude deformity.

Kenneth Jones, M.C.S.P.

Dear Editor,

I read Mr. Poole's letter in the February SPASTICS NEWS, and it is something I have been worrying about for a long time now, as I can see a great difference in my son since we have been unable to have regular physiotherapy. To think of all the years, all winds and weathers, I took him backwards and forwards to Taunton! Not only was it an outing for him, but for me it was knowing I could talk over problems with someone who understood. Makes you wonder if we have gone very far, in some ways.

I can only say keep trying, Mr. Poole, you never know, something may be done one day. Still hoping,

(Mrs.) M. Wastnidge,
Langport.

TARGET EXCEEDED

Dear Editor,

We can *all* feel justly proud of our efforts in exceeding the target in the sale of Christmas cards this year—our Group total was £285. It has really been a stupendous effort. In our Group one of our "Mums" has sold personally £85 worth of cards! Is this a record for one person do you think? She is Mrs. Youngman of Wix, near Colchester—the Mayor of Colchester congratulated her at the Children's Christmas party.

Mrs. C. M. Acheson,
Colchester & District Group.

SPASTICS CONFERENCE (I)

Dear Editor,

I would like to congratulate Miss Dawson Shepherd and her fellow writers on the three articles in the February issue, advocating that a conference for spastics themselves should be organised under the auspices of the Spastics Society. I think it is a wonderful idea and hope it can be implemented in 1965.

It would give us spastics the opportunity to express our appreciation to the Society for the many services which are provided for us in the spheres of treatment, welfare work, education and training and, perhaps the most important of all, assistance in finding employment or providing homework. So many of us have reason to be so very grateful to the Society and a Spastics' Conference would afford an opportune occasion for demonstrating our appreciation.

To attend any large conference is always an invigorating and enlightening experience and in the case of a conference for spastics, as well as being an invaluable opportunity for spastics to exchange views and ideas on matters which are of vital importance to them, it would also afford, indirectly, an opportunity to improve their self-confidence—an attribute so essential to spastics, but so often lacking. I think it essential that as many spastics as possible should be invited to attend and all should be encouraged to take an active part in the conference rather than providing just another audience for the experts.

Good luck to the first conference for spastics themselves, and may it soon be an annual event!

Yours sincerely,
Rosalind Osborne.
Colwyn Bay.

SPASTICS CONFERENCE (II)

Dear Editor,

I come from Bradford. What I would like to know is, if this idea came to pass, how would you go about choosing spastics to represent their constituency, for this three-day conference?

I entirely agree with Rosemary Dawson Shepherd when she says three days are not long enough. Everybody has to put his own point of view on whatever subject is introduced by the speaker.

Speaking as a person who is a spastic I have had pretty bad times myself regarding employment, etc., but I am at last fixed up with a job at Low

Moor Alloy Steelworks. It has all happened with will power and plenty of hope, and nothing else.

Just think a minute or two of the hundreds and hundreds of spastics who cannot do things for themselves. What are the people of this conference going to do for them? Let them walk the streets, as I was doing for three years?

I suppose, if and when this conference takes place, they will get down to finding out the problem of cerebral palsy, and its causes, its cures, and finally its ultimate victory.

There was very much concern when the Thalidomide cases came but there is no mention of it at all now. The Golden word is *RESEARCH* and if a case like that can succeed then there is no doubt at all that our case, put right and properly and orderly, should succeed as well.

Unsigned.

A conference does not mean every member says something on every item on the agenda.

A conference is not the proper place to find jobs for spastic people. A conference is not the proper place for finding the causes of and cure for cerebral palsy.

The Spastics Society finances a two million pound medical research programme at Guy's Hospital in London.

You do not even send your name and address—fat lot of good you'd be at a conference! Let us have it now so we can send you your 10/6d. publication fee. And start to think!

Letters by spastic people published on this page will bring you a fee of 10s. 6d.

Articles by spastic contributors are indicated by a STAR on the Contents List

PEN FRIEND

Dear Editor,

I am a reader of the SPASTICS NEWS and would like a pen friend.

I am twenty-three years old, my interests are films, reading, records and occasional dancing.

I would prefer to write to a boy of my own age or two or three years older.
Stephanie Newbury,
14 Heather Lane,
Ravenstone,
Coalville, Leicester.

DONATION

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are sending this cheque for £2 10s. to help the children who are not as lucky as we are. We have been making lots of dolls clothes and lavender bags and we also got together our books and toys we no longer play with. We also made lots of cakes and wrote out cards to all our friends telling them we were having a bazaar. We hope this money will help the children to have the fun we have had.

Susan Bamfield, aged 9.

Janet Hartgrove, aged 9.

16 Kathleen Ferrier Crescent,
Laindon,
Basildon, Essex.

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MARCH BILLIARDS AND SNOOKER EXHIBITIONS

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------|
| 1st | Workmen's Club, 37 James St., Oswaldtwistle, Accrington | R. Williams |
| 2nd | Epsom Common Wkmen's, 121 Stamford Grn., Epsom, Surrey | F. Davis |
| 3rd | St. Neots Const. Club, 12 New St., St. Neots, Hunts. | F. Davis |
| 4th | Mill Hill Services Club, Hartley Av., Mill Hill, N.W.7 | J. Gardner & R. Williams |
| 5th | Workmen's Club, Cannon St., Wellingborough, Northants | F. Davis & R. Williams |
| 6th | Camberley Workmen's, Obelisk St., Camberley, Surrey | F. Davis & R. Williams |
| 9th | Dormans Works Athletic Club, South Av., Dormanstown, Redcar | J. Rea |
| 10th | Cons. Club, Uppang Lane, Whitby, Yorks. | J. Rea |
| 10th | Manor Club, Albert Rd., West Bridgeford, Nottingham | R. Williams |
| 11th | Moss Side Cons., Great Western St., Moss Side, Manchester | R. Williams |
| 11th | Comrades of Great War Club, 15 Regent St., Heckmondwike, Yorks | J. Rea |
| 12th | Hartshead Wkmen's, Prospect Rd., Hartshead, Liversedge, Yorks | J. Rea |
| 15th | North Ward Reform Club, Lincoln St., Bolton | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 16th | Walkden Labour Club, Cecil St., Bolton Rd., Walkden, Manchester | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 17th | Little Lever Cons. Club, Little Lever, nr. Bolton | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 18th | Holy Name Catholic Club, Portsmouth St., Ardwick, Manchester | R. Williams |
| 18th | Brit. Leg. Club, Wilfred St., Walkden, Manchester | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 19th | Ferranti Rec. Club, Hollinwood Av., Hollinwood, Oldham | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 23rd | Oxted British Legion Club, Oxted, Surrey | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 24th | Const. Club, 72 Oxford St., Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts | F. Davis |
| 24th | Victoria Billiards Club, Alexandra St., Southend-on-Sea | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 25th | Southbourne Cons. Club, 37 Harcourt Rd., Boscombe East, Bournemouth | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 26th | Fordingbridge Club, Roundhill, Fordingbridge, Hants | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 30th | Services Memorial Club, 57 Carnarvon Rd., Clacton-on-Sea, Essex | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 31st | Ex-Service Club, William St., Herne Bay, Kent | J. Gardner & J. Rea |
| 2nd | British Legion Club, Liverpool Rd., Cadishead, Manchester | R. Williams |

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To: THE EDITOR,
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